



Stichting Zelfbeschikking West-Sahara

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De Stichting Zelfbeschikking West-Sahara voert campagne om het Saharaanse volk in staat te stellen zijn onvervreemdbare recht op zelfbeschikking uit te oefenen. Het Internationale Gerechtshof in Den Haag kwam in 1975 tot de uitspraak dat het volk van de toenmalige Spaanse Sahara in de gelegenheid gesteld moet worden zelf over zijn staatkundige toekomst te beslissen. De Marokkaanse invasie en daarop volgende bezetting heeft de Saharanen dit recht al meer dan 25 jaar ontnomen.

Nieuwsbrief West-Sahara nr 3 – 10 maart 2003

Tenzij anders vermeld, zijn de Engelstalige berichten overgenomen uit *Sahara Analysis*, de elektronische nieuwsbrief van de *Western Sahara Campaign* in Groot-Brittannië. Voor korte, altijd actuele nieuwsberichten verwijzen wij naar de website van de *Association pour un référendum libre et régulier au Sahara occidental (ARSO)*, www.arso.org, rubriek Weekly News.

Acties

Schrijf voor Salek Bazaid

Op 24 september 2002 drongen Marokkaanse veiligheidsagenten de huizen binnen van enkele leden van Forum Gerechtigheid en Vrede, sectie Sahara. De in burger geklede agenten voerden huiszoekingen uit – zonder huiszoekingsbevel, bedreigden familieleden en namen acht of negen mensen mee. Onder hen bevond zich Salek Bazaid.

Salek Bazaid is een voormalig politiek gevangene. Hij maakte deel uit van de groep van de “zes van Agadir” die in 1993 tot 20 jaar celstraf werd veroordeeld door het militaire gerechtshof in Rabat, wegens deelname aan een vreedzame demonstratie in Smara in 1992. Hij werd door Amnesty International geadopteerd, en kreeg in 1996 kwijtschelding van de resterende straf.

Op 12 maart begint het proces tegen Salek Bazaid. Hij zou tijdens zijn detentie zijn gemarteld. Schrijf een brief, in het Engels of het Frans, om uw bezorgdheid te uiten over de beweerde martelingen en de hoop uit te spreken dat hij een eerlijk proces zal krijgen, naar:

Ministre de la Justice, S.E. Omar Azziman,
Ministère de la Justice
Place Mamounia,
Rabat, Marokko

Of naar de Marokkaanse ambassadeur in Nederland :
Z.E. de heer dr. Nourdine Benomar Alami
Ambassade van het koninkrijk Marokko
Oranjestraat 9
1524 JB Den Haag

West-Sahara in de media

Op 12 maart in Madiwodo (VPRO)

Woensdag 12 maart wordt in het VPRO-programma Madiwodo tussen 11 en 12 uur uitgebreid aandacht besteed aan de West-Sahara. Drie gasten krijgen het woord: Paolo de Mas (Universiteit van

Amsterdam, Marcel Brus (hoofddocent Volkenrecht aan de Universiteit van Leiden, en Liesbeth den Haan (Stichting Zelfbeschikking West-Sahara); zij vertellen over de invasie, de rol van de Verenigde Naties en de gevolgen voor de bevolking.

Te horen op 747 AM, en enige tijd na de uitzending later via de website van de VPRO (www.vpro.nl/madiwodo).

Saharaanse en Palestijnse vluchtelingenkampen

In het magazine Forced Migration Review (FMR) van januari 2003 is een interessante artikel verschenen van de hand van Randa Farah, een van oorsprong Palestijns onderzoekster verbonden aan het Antropologisch Instituut van de universiteit van Western Ontario. Het artikel, onder de titel *Western Sahara and Palestine: shared refugee experiences*, is als pdf-document te vinden op de website www.arso.org, en op de eigen website van FMR: www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR16/fmr16.7.pdf

Rapport Internationale Onderzoeksmissie naar bezet West-Sahara verschenen

Een uitermate belangwekkend rapport is verschenen van een internationale onderzoeksmissie in bezet gebied van de Westelijke Sahara, gezamenlijk uitgevoerd door France Libertés en AFASPA, van 25 oktober tot 5 november 2002.

Het beschrijft de situatie ten aanzien van de burgerlijke, politieke en sociaal-economische en culturele rechten van de Saharanen, en de situatie ten aanzien van de plundering van de natuurlijke rijkdommen van dit niet-autonome gebied. De verzamelde informatie bestaat voornamelijk uit getuigenverklaringen, en deze informatie wordt geplaatst in de context van bestaande wetgeving en conventies op het gebied van de mensenrechten en sociaal-economische rechten.

Op verzoek kan het Engelstalige document per e-mail worden toegezonden (pdf-formaat; 1,423 MB). Het rapport is ook in te zien op de website van France Libertés, www.france-libertes.fr

Sportsdesk

Sahara Marathon results (Saharawi Press Service – www.spsrasd.info (French))

The Sahara Marathon and its related events have been taking place around the Saharawi refugee camps over the last few days. First place in the marathon went to Jorge Aubeso Martinez, Spanish 100 km champion, in 3 hr 7 min 53 sec, followed by his compatriot, Miguel Martinez Basukro. In third place was the Italian Vincenzo Castellano. In the women's marathon, the Italian Rosa Maria Manari won the race in 4hr 12 min 35 sec, followed by the Spanish athlete Carme Espinal Merino and the American Lynn Sathrum. The first Saharawi, Mohamed Mustafa, came 13th with a time of 4hr 44 min 59 sec, highly impressive in view of the lack of technical backup for young Saharawi athletes. Other shorter events also took place, and one longer: the fearsome "Ultramarathon", run from El Ayoun to Dakhla, 120 miles, in 3 stages.

News

Ali Salem Tamek starts again hunger strike

On January 30th, an official delegation visited the political prisoner Ali Salem Tamek in the penitentiary of Salé. They assured him there would be improvement in his prison conditions. The Moroccan Arab-language daily "*An-Nahar*" had published a detailed report from Tamek on prison conditions in Inezgane prison where he passed his first days of detention. Tamek started a 48-hour hunger strike to demand the right to receive visits on Saturday and public holidays. A Spanish lawyer and a journalist were not authorised to visit him. Action committees for the release of Tamek and all political detainees were created in Assa and Boujdour; they can be contacted by email: comiteaction@caramail.com.

The same day, Tamek was attacked twice by a common law prisoner, a drug trafficker, who tried to strike him, once with a metal bar and another time with a knife, shouting "The Sahara is Moroccan, Long live Mohamed VI". Thanks to the intervention of his fellow detainees, Tamek was not hurt. He sent a letter of protest to the King's chief justice at the court of appeal in Rabat, asking for assurance of his safety in prison. The president of the Forum for Truth and Justice, Maitre Essabar Mohamed, paid Tamek a visit to inform himself about the incident.

At the end of February, Ali Salem made a public appeal, in which he announced an other hunger strike.

Due to the failure of the ministry of justice to respect its engagements taken in our meeting of jan.06.2003, with a representative team, to my warning hunger strike of jan.30 and 31.2003, and although the " Forum of Justice and Truth " has sent two letters to the penitentiary administration demanding to allow to doctors team to visit me and the lobby of many local and international human rights groups to satisfy all my complains and rights as a political prisoner, the penitentiary administration continue to ignore my requests and force me to take harder decisions. That's why I decided to start an unlimited hunger strike beginning the March 10th 2003 for the following reasons: The behavior and violence I endure from prison's guards like Khalid Afroukh, Tadjousti Abdelmajid, which are convicted of all kinds of drug's conspiracy, Mokhtari Hassan, Driss Achabil. I addressed two complaint letters to the prison's Director on 26 and 27 Feb 2003..

- *No official complaint was filed against the prisoner that made an attempt to my life on Jan. 30th 2003 although I addressed two letters to the attorney general of the appeal Court of Rabat on Jan 30th and 31st 2003.*
- *Up to now, I'm not allowed visits on weekends and none working days as well as political prisoners in others prisons.*
- *Allow a doctor's team from the victim's rehabilitation center to visit me.*
- *Allow human rights groups and journalists to visit me.*

Finally, I salute all human rights groups and journalists for their support to my cause and I urge them lobbying the Moroccan authorities to satisfy my requests.

Ali Salem Tamek
Political prisoner
Detainee n° 86401
Prison Civile de Salé
Salé, Marokko

Overgenomen van www.arso.org

27th February: 28th Anniversary of Declaration of Independence of the SADR (SPS, ARSO)

SADR President Mohamed Abdelaziz reiterated the commitment of the POLISARIO Front to self-determination for the Saharawi people and the referendum promised by the UN – a commitment that the National Secretariat had reaffirmed 5 days previously when considering its comments on the latest proposals from James Baker, Kofi Annan's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara.

Meanwhile, on the same day in Zag, Southern Morocco, pupils at the high school of this military garrison town were refused entry to their classes because they arrived wearing traditional Saharawi dress. The pupils organised a sit-in outside the school in protest.

French manoeuvres in the Maghreb (press agencies, Le Matin - Algeria, El Watan – Algeria)

In a recent interview, Jacques Chirac attempted to revive rumours that France was offering Algeria favourable terms in exchange for abandoning its support for the Saharawi people's right to self-determination, by confirming that his government was talking to the Algerians about Western Sahara. Long-term Morocco-watcher Giles Perrault recently described this scenario as "the dream of French diplomacy", but expressed doubt that the Algerian military was willing to sell out the Saharawis, or that they themselves would let this happen. Indeed, official Algerian statements reiterate Algeria's support for the UN referendum plan and, concerning Morocco-Algerian relations, emphasise that the two countries have no need for "mediation" - i.e. French intervention

Demonstration in El Ayoun broken up (ARSO correspondent)

Sit-ins called by the Forum for Justice and Truth took place in Rabat and El Ayoun last week. While the demonstration outside the Ministry of Justice in Rabat passed off peacefully, in El Ayoun the crowd, including families of detainees and human rights defenders, was surrounded by a substantial security force presence who soon waded in order to break up the sit-in violently. There were a number of minor injuries, a banner and a camera were seized, and three students were arrested. Demonstrators stayed until the students were released and the confiscated articles were returned.

MEPs raise Western Sahara with EU-Moroccan Association (press releases from Intergroup)
Members of the European Parliament intergroup "Peace for the Saharawi People" wrote to ex-Tory party Chairman Chris Patten, now EU Commissioner for External Affairs, and called on the EU in general to re-examine its relationship with Morocco in the light of human rights concerns, and Morocco's illegal occupation and exploitation of the Western Sahara. The call came on the eve of the 3rd meeting of the Council of the EU-Morocco Association.

Overview: Daylight Robbery

In previous issues we have emphasised how the principal use of Western Sahara to the Moroccan regime is to rally nationalist sentiment and divert attention from the poverty in which most Moroccans live under the rule of the King and the makhzen. Nevertheless, various members of the regime have not missed the opportunity to cash in on the natural resources of the territory.

At present, the principal productive industries in Western Sahara are phosphate mining and fishing. Phosphate mining is carried out by the company Phosboucraa, in which the Spanish state still holds a 35% stake. Having declined considerably since its 1970s peak, Boucraa mine's production still represents 10% of Morocco's overall phosphate production (2 million out of 20.7 million tonnes in 20011). Morocco is the world's largest phosphate exporter. Boucraa phosphates are currently exported to Spain, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and USA among others.

After the Moroccan invasion, the Saharawi workers at the mine and its associated processing plants were promised that their existing terms and conditions would be respected. But when the Moroccan management took over, Saharawi workers were forced to accept inferior terms to the Spanish and Moroccan workers. Many were demoted; Saharawis now make up just 10% of the workforce, and none of them have positions of responsibility. Many who have campaigned for improved conditions, compensation for injuries and independent trade union rights have been violently mistreated by the Moroccan security services.

Overfishing: mining the sea

The combination of cold, fertile currents from the deep Atlantic meeting warm, well-lit water in an unusually large continental shelf area (the area of relatively shallow water immediately offshore) has given Western Sahara one of the world's richest maritime fisheries. Small-scale "peasant" fishing is the biggest employer, and this has been suggested as a model for a high-employment, ecologically sustainable fishing industry in an independent Western Sahara. But currently the most profitable industries are trawling and processing into fish-powder and oil for export (El Ayoun), and squid-fishing for export (Dakhla). Western Sahara currently accounts for c50% of "Morocco's" catch, which is the most lucrative in Africa. Exports go across Europe (especially Spain) and beyond. Sustainability is an issue: the Moroccan Department of Maritime Fisheries recently described squid stocks as "in a state of advanced overexploitation"². Official fishing embargoes to allow stocks to recover seem to be unenforceable. Interestingly, Moroccan generals, politicians and police officials control several of the largest companies involved in this industry. For example, Generals Kadiri and Benslimane own "KB Fish" of Dakhla; "DIPROMER's" partners include Driss Basri (former minister of Interior).

Oil production is still in the future. TotalFinaElf are probably currently more worried about their contracts with Saddam Hussein, but they won't welcome the legal tangle awaiting them if they try to take Western Sahara's oil against the UN's ruling. Likewise the US firm Kerr-McGee; and both will have taken note of the tumbling share price of their hired survey company TGS-NOPEC. Meanwhile, West Africa specialist Fusion Oil is working on its survey for the POLISARIO Front, with all exploitation put off until after Saharan independence. They are hoping that respecting international law will pay. But for now, it seems that public and private gangsters are colluding to steal the resources of Western Sahara while the Saharawis are denied justice.

Sources:

1: *Office Cherifien de Phosphates, Morocco;*

2: *L'economiste-Maroc, Jan 2003.*